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Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General begins five-day official visit to Australia; addresses Global Conference on Cultural Diversity in Sydney.

+ Special Representative for Rwanda puts number of internally displaced people killed in Kibeho camp at 2,000; UNAMIR provides security and support for relief operations.

+ UNPROFOR reports increased military activity throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina; Special Representative continues efforts to extend cessation of hostilities agreement.

+ 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference concludes general debate.

+ Secretary-General appoints Gilberto Schlittler as Special Envoy for Guatemala peace process.

+ Committee against Torture begins fourteenth session in Geneva.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today left Indonesia to begin a five-day official visit to Australia. He was accompanied by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Marrack Goulding, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso.

In an address to the Global Conference on Cultural Diversity in Sydney, the Secretary-General said cultural diversity was a central issue for the United Nations and must be integrated into all aspects of its work. He noted that the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established culture as a fundamental right. The Organization's raison d'etre was to foster the integrity of cultures and to promote understanding and dialogue among the peoples of the world.

The Secretary-General identified three pillars of a global culture: a culture of peace, a culture of development and a culture of democracy. Peace required the interaction of different cultures, while development depended on

education. Democracy could not succeed without a commitment to diversity, he concluded.

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Special Representative Shahryar Khan has revised his estimate of the number of internally displaced people killed by Rwandese troops on Saturday to 2,000, a United Nations spokesman said today. He has also asked the President of Rwanda for assurances that the Army will not attack the 1,000 people remaining in the Kibeho camp. However, there have been reports that the Army has been denying them food and water.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) has been seeking permission to transport those wounded on Saturday to Kigali. The Mission is also providing security and support for the distribution of relief supplies. Heavy rains and poor road conditions have made movement difficult, but there are sufficient supplies on hand to meet immediate emergency needs.

Almost 200,000 internally displaced people have already returned to their home communes, the spokesman noted. The United Nations has deployed military observers and human rights monitors in those communes.

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There has been an increase in military activity almost everywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Bihac safe area was shelled from Serbian positions yesterday, while 1,800 firing incidents were reported around Sarajevo. The city's airport was closed today after an incoming cargo plane was hit by three rounds fired from Government positions.

Special Representative Yasushi Akashi will travel to Pale and Sarajevo this weekend in another attempt to secure an extension of the cessation of hostilities agreement which expires on 30 April, the spokesman continued. Mr. Akashi will be looking for a shorter extension than the four months originally sought. He is hopeful, but not optimistic, that progress can be achieved, although the positions of the parties remain far apart.

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The 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) today concluded its general debate. The four-week Conference of the 178 States parties is meeting to review the operation of the Treaty and to decide whether it should be extended indefinitely or for a fixed period or periods.

Gunnar Palsson of Iceland expressed support for the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty. However, its effectiveness would only be guaranteed through the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and a

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ban on the production of fissile materials. He also expressed concern over the discharge of radioactive waste into the marine environment by nuclear reprocessing facilities.

Philip Richard Owade of Kenya noted that the General Assembly had repeatedly called for assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons for non-nuclear-weapon States. He welcomed Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on positive security assurances, but said it did not explicitly address the question of negative assurances. The only definite assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was their total elimination.

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The Secretary-General has appointed Gilberto Schlittler as his Special Envoy for the Guatemala peace process, at the level of Assistant Secretary-General. Mr. Schlittler, a national of Brazil, has been head of the Guatemala Unit in the Department of Political Affairs since its establishment in October 1994.

As Special Envoy, Mr. Schlittler will continue to direct the work of the Guatemala Unit and coordinate all activities relating to the peace process, including the work of the Moderator.

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The Committee against Torture yesterday began its fourteenth session in Geneva by adopting its agenda. The Committee also heard a statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ibrahima Fall, who gave an overview of recent events relevant to its work. Mr. Fall noted that the International Convention against Torture and other Cruel and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment now had 88 States parties. Regrettably, however, it was the United Nations human rights treaty with the lowest number of accessions and ratifications.

During the two-week session, the Committee's experts will examine information appearing to indicate that torture is being systematically practised in a State party to the Convention. They will also consider communications from individuals claiming to be victims of a violation by a State party of the provisions of the Convention.

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